Chapter 1425 Interchange Justification Report

1425.01 General

This chapter provides guidance on Interchange Justification Reports (IJR), developing the required documentation for an IJR, and the sequence of an IJR presentation. The guidance is applicable to both Interstate and non-Interstate limited access routes. Engineers in the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Headquarters (HQ) Access and Hearings Unit specialize in providing support for meeting the guidance provided in this chapter. They should be consulted early and frequently during the development of projects that require the types of documentation described herein.

Federal law requires Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approval of all revisions to the Interstate system, including changes to limited access. Both FHWA and WSDOT policy require the formal submission of a request to either break or revise the existing limited access on Interstate and state routes, respectively. An IJR is the document used to request a new access point or access point revision on limited access freeways in Washington State. The IJR is used to document the planning process, the evaluation of the alternatives considered, the design of the preferred alternative, and the coordination that supports and justifies the request for an access revision. The IJR is scalable to the complexity of the proposal (see Figures 1425-1, 2, and 3).

A transportation proposal that requires a break in or revision to the existing limited access control, such as a new interchange, should begin with a study of the corridor to determine existing and future access needs. These needs then become part of the statewide plan, called the *State Highway System Plan*. The *State Highway System Plan defines Service Objectives, Action Strategie*s, and costs to plan for, maintain, operate, preserve, and improve the state highway system for the next 20 years. Work that does not fit any of the action strategies will not be authorized or considered in the development of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) or any other budget proposal. (See Chapter 120.) Alternatives should be developed and evaluated. A final preferred alternative is then analyzed, selected, approved, designed, constructed, maintained, and monitored.

The corridor study must evaluate existing local infrastructure and existing access points to determine whether an access point revision is necessary. The evaluation of the proposal begins by studying the corridor throughout the area of influence.

For all complex projects (new or significantly reconfigured interchanges), WSDOT strongly advises that a support team be established to help integrate the planning, programming, environmental, traffic, safety, and design efforts that lead to development of a proposal. When a third party, such as a local agency, is proposing an access point revision, FHWA requires that a study team be formed.

An IJR is a stand-alone document that includes the necessary supporting information needed for a request to break or revise the existing limited access. The IJR includes information about the proposed project, the new access or access point revision, and information about all other local and state improvements that are needed for the access to operate. The complexity of the report varies considerably with the scope of the proposed access point revision. For example, for minor ramp revisions, added on- and off-ramp lanes, and locked gates to sites normally accessed by another route, the approval request may be condensed to a letter format that includes adequate justification. An operational/safety analysis may be required to assure no adverse impacts to the Interstate or crossroad(s). Contact the HQ Access and Hearings Unit to determine the appropriate level of report documentation needed for all access changes.

An IJR cannot be approved prior to the approval of the project environmental document. For example, a project environmental document might be an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or an Environmental Assessment (EA). Approval of these documents is signified by a Record of Decision for an EIS, or a Finding of No Significant Impact might be issued for an EA document indicating an EIS is not required. (Chapter 220 provides further discussion on project environmental documentation.)

If the new or revised access proposal is found to be acceptable prior to the environmental approval, a finding of engineering and operational acceptability is granted by FHWA. Final approval of the IJR is granted concurrently with the appropriate environmental documentation. If the proposal is found to be acceptable after the project environmental document is approved, the IJR can be approved. On Interstate projects, a submittal letter shall be sent by the region through the WSDOT Access and Hearings Unit requesting final FHWA approval of the IJR. On non-Interstate projects, a similar process is followed, except that the WSDOT Assistant State Design Engineer grants the final approval, not the FHWA.

Recognizing that the time period between the approval of the IJR, the environmental documentation, and the construction contract commonly spans several years, the approved IJR will be reviewed and updated if significant changes have occurred during this process. A summary assessment will be submitted to the HQ Design Office and FHWA for evaluation to determine whether the IJR needs to be updated. Contact the HQ Access and Hearings Unit to coordinate this summary assessment.

1425.02 References

(1) Law

Laws and codes (both federal and state) that may pertain to this chapter include the following:

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 23 CFR Part 450 (implementing 23 USC Section 111)

40 CFR Parts 51 and 93 (regarding federal conformity with state and federal air quality implementation plans)

United States Code 23 USC Section 111 (requires the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to approve access revisions to the Interstate System), 134 (Metropolitan Planning), and 135 (Statewide Planning)

(2) Design Guidance

The following contain guidance that is included by reference within the text:

Highway Capacity Manual, Special Report No 209 (HCM), Transportation Research Council

Local Agency Guidelines (LAG), M 36-63, WSDOT

(3) Supporting Information

The following were used in the development of this chapter or contain additional information:

Forecasting and Methods Matrix (when available), WSDOT

Notice of policy statement: "Additional Interchanges to the Interstate System," Federal Highway Administration notice published in the Federal Register, October 22, 1990 (Vol. 55, No. 204)

Notice of policy statement: "Additional Interchanges to the Interstate System," Federal Highway Administration notice published in the Federal Register on February 11, 1998. (Vol. 63, No. 28) (accessible in http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreg/a980211c.html, under FHWA notices, "Interstate system, additional interchanges, policy statement, 7045-7047")

1425.03 Definitions

access A means of entering or leaving a public road, street, or highway with respect to abutting property or another public road, street, or highway.

access break Any point from inside or outside the state limited access right of way limited access hachures that crosses over, under, or physically through the plane of the limited access, is an access break or "break in access" (including, but not limited, to locked gates and temporary construction access breaks).

access point Any point from inside or outside the limited access hachures that allows entrance to or exit from the traveled way of a limited access freeway, including "locked gate" access and temporary construction access.

access point revision A new access point or a revision of an existing interchange/intersection configuration. Locked gates and temporary construction breaks are also access point revisions.

accident rate Accidents per one million vehicle miles traveled.

alternatives Possible solutions to accomplish a defined purpose and need. These include local and state transportation system design options, locations, and travel demand management and transportation system management type-improvements, such as ramp metering, mass transit, and high occupancy vehicle (HOV) facilities.

area of influence The area that will be directly impacted by the proposed action: freeway main line, ramps, crossroads, immediate off-system intersections, and local roadway system.

assumptions document A document developed at the beginning of the study phase to capture access study assumptions and criteria such as traffic volumes, design year, opening year, travel demand assumptions, baseline conditions, and design year conditions. The document also serves as a historical record of the processes, dates, and decisions made by the team.

baseline The existing transportation system configuration and traffic volumes for a specific year against which to compare possible alternative solutions.

break See "*access break*" above.

design year 20 years from the beginning of construction.

ECS Environmental Classification Summary (Documented Categorical Exclusion).

FONSI Finding of No Significant Impact (Environmental Assessment).

freeway A divided highway that has a minimum of two lanes in each direction, for the exclusive use of traffic, and with full access control.

limited access Full, Partial, or Modified access control is planned and established for a corridor and then acquired as the right to limit access to each individual parcel.

need A statement which identifies the transportation problem(s) that the proposal is designed to address and explains how the problem will be resolved. An existing or anticipated travel demand that has been documented through the study process to require a change in access to the state's limited access freeway system.

no-build condition The baseline, plus state transportation plan and comprehensive plan improvements expected to exist, as applied to the year of opening, or the design year.

proposal The combination of projects/actions selected through the project study process to meet a specific transportation system need.

purpose General project goals such as: (1) improve safety, (2) enhance mobility, or (3) enhance economic development.

Record of Decision Under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Record of Decision (ROD) accompanies the Final Environmental Impact Statement; explains the reasons for the project decision; discusses alternatives and values considered in selection of the preferred alternative; and summarizes mitigation measures and commitments that will be incorporated in the project.

study area The transportation system area to study in both step one of the study process and for an IJR. The study area is a minimum of one interchange upstream and downstream from the proposal.

support team An integral part of the IJR process consisting of an assemblage of people organized to develop and analyze solutions to meet the need of a proposal.

Transportation Management Area (TMA) Urbanized areas with populations of 200,000 or greater are federally designated as Transportation Management Areas.

travel demand Local travel demand constitutes short trips that should be made on the local transportation system, such as intracity roads and streets. Regional travel demand constitutes long trips that are made on the regional transportation system, such as Interstate, regional, and/or intercity/ interregional roads, streets, or highways.

traveled way The portion of the roadway intended for the movement of vehicles, exclusive of shoulders and lanes for parking, turning, and storage for turning.

trips Short trips are normally intracity. Long trips are normally interstate, regional, or interregional.

1425.04 Procedures

Figures 1425-1 and 2 list the project types most likely to affect freeway safety and operations, requiring the submission of an Interchange Justification Report. Figure 1425-3 lists project types least likely to require the submission of an IJR. Consult the HQ Access and Hearings Unit early in the process for specific direction.

Gaining concurrence and approval for an access point revision is a multistep process. The first step consists of a study. If the study shows that the purpose and need of the proposal cannot be achieved with improvements to the local infrastructure only, the next step would normally be an IJR. (See the IJR Flow Chart, Figure 1425-4.)

(1) The First Step

Study the transportation systems in the area. This study will identify the segments of both the local and regional network that are currently experiencing congestion or safety deficiencies, or where planned land use changes will prompt the need to evaluate the demands on and the capacity of the transportation system. The study area includes the affected existing and proposed adjacent interchanges/intersections upstream and downstream from the proposed access point revision. If it is documented that the proposal creates no impacts to the adjacent interchanges/ intersections, then analyze only through the area of influence. When the area of influence extends beyond the one interchange upstream and downstream, extend the analysis far enough to include the extent of the traffic impacts.

Segments of the local and regional network within the study area will be evaluated for system improvements. Part of the study process is to identify local infrastructure needs and develop a proposal. The study must consider investments in local infrastructure improvements to meet the needs of the proposal, because those improvements may provide the desired solution.

During the study process and while developing a proposal, it is important to use the data and analysis methods required for an IJR. If the study indicates that an IJR is warranted, the study data can be utilized in the IJR. Establish a support team for the study. This same support team would also be involved with the IJR process if the study shows that either a revision or a new access point is needed to meet the proposal purpose and need. The support team normally consists of the following:

- FHWA Area Engineer for Interstate Projects
- Region's Design or Project Development Engineer or Designee
- HQ Assistant State Design Engineer
- HQ Access and Hearings Unit Engineer
- HQ Traffic Office Representative
- Representative From Local Agencies (city, county, port, or tribal government)
- Recorder

The support team is encouraged to call upon specialists as needed; for example:

- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO)
- WSDOT Region
    - Planning
    - Design
    - Environmental
    - Maintenance
    - IJR writer

- WSDOT Headquarters
  - Design
  - Bridge
  - Traffic
  - Geotechnical
- Project Proponent Specialists
- Transit Agencies

The support team's role is to:

- Develop a charter that includes the processes for reaching agreement, resolving disputes, and assigning responsibility for final decisions when consensus is not reached.
- Develop purpose, need, and vision statements for the study. This should be consistent with the project environmental document.
- Expedite the study step (and, if needed, the IJR development and review process) through early communication and agreement.
- Agree on area of influence and travel assumptions for the study and, if an IJR is needed, for each of the alternatives being considered.
- Develop the access assumptions document.
- Provide guidance and support.
- Evaluate data and identify possible alternatives for the proposal during the study and, if needed, for an IJR.
- Contribute material for the report that documents the discussions and decisions.
- Review results and determine whether an IJR is warranted.
- Ensure the compatibility of data used in various studies.
- Ensure integration of the Project Definition process, Value Engineering studies, public involvement efforts, environmental analyses, operational analyses, safety analyses, other analyses for the study (and, if needed, to prepare an IJR). This encourages the use of consistent data.
- Address design elements. Status of known deviations must be noted in Policy Point 4. Deviations are discouraged on new accesses.

(2) The Second Step

Prepare a detailed IJR using the guidance in 1425.05, "Interchange Justification Report and Supporting Analyses," and Figure 1425-4.

The IJR addresses eight specific policy topics. (See Figures 1425-1 and 2 for exceptions.) In order of presentation, the topics are:

1. Need for the Access Point Revision
2. Reasonable Alternatives
3. Operational and Accident Analyses
4. Access Connections and Design
5. Land Use and Transportation Plans
6. Future Interchanges
7. Coordination
8. Environmental Processes

The IJR is initiated early in the environmental process. Traffic analyses help define the area of impact and the range of alternatives. Since the traffic data required for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) or the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and the operational/safety analyses of the decision report are similar, these documents are usually developed together using the same data sources and procedures.

(3) The Third Step

Concurrence and approval of a new or revised access point is based on the IJR. The IJR contains sufficient information about and evaluation/analysis of the proposal to provide assurance that the safety and operations of the freeway system are not adversely impacted.

The region, with the help of the support team, prepares the IJR and submits four draft copies, including backup traffic data, for review. For a final IJR submittal, contact the HQ Access and Hearing Unit for the necessary number of copies. All IJRs are submitted to the HQ Access and Hearings Unit for review. Interstate IJRs are submitted by Headquarters to FHWA for concurrence and approval.

Interstate access point revisions are reviewed by both Headquarters and FHWA. If they are found to be acceptable to FHWA, they are given a finding of engineering and operational acceptability. Some Interstate IJRs are reviewed and approved by the local FHWA Division Office. Other Interstate IJRs are reviewed and approved by the Federal Highway Administration in Washington, DC. Additional review time is necessary for reports that have to be submitted to Washington DC. (See Figure 1425-1.)

If the IJR is finalized prior to the completion of the environmental process, it can be submitted for concurrence. Concurrence with the proposed Interstate access point revision can be made by FHWA in the form of a finding of engineering and operational acceptability. Final IJR approval by FHWA is provided concurrently with the appropriate final environmental decision: ECS, FONSI, or ROD (see definitions). For non-Interstate routes, the Assistant State Design Engineer's approval is given concurrently with environmental approval. (See Figure 1425-4.)

1425.05 Interchange Justification Report and Supporting Analyses

Begin the IJR with an executive summary. Briefly state what access point revision is being submitted for a decision and why the revision is needed. Include a brief summary of the proposal. Formatting for the IJR includes (1) providing numbered tabs in the decision report for the policy points and appendices, and (2) numbering all pages including references and appendices. A suggestion for page numbering is to number each individual section, such as "Policy Point 3, PP3–4" and "Appendix 2, A2–25." This allows for changes without renumbering the entire report. The IJR must be assembled in the policy point order noted in this chapter.

On the bottom left of each page, place the revision date for each version of the IJR. As an individual page is updated, this revision date will help track the most current version of that page. Also, include the title of the report on the bottom left of each page. The use of comb binding is not allowed.

The eight policy points, which apply to both urban and rural areas, are presented below. Guidance is provided for the most extreme condition—a new interchange in an urbanized area. The scope of the analyses and documentation need not be as extensive for more modest access point revisions. Factors that affect the scope include location (rural or urban), access points (new or revised), ramps (new or existing), and ramp terminals (freeway or local road).

(1) **Policy Point 1:** Need for the Access Point Revision

What are the current and projected needs? Why are the existing access points and the existing or improved local system unable to meet the proposal needs? Is the anticipated demand short or long trip?

Describe the need for the access point revision and why the existing access points and the existing or improved local system do not address the need. How does the proposal meet the anticipated travel demand? Provide the analysis and data to support the need for the access request.

(a) ***Project Description.*** Describe the needs being addressed and the proposal.

Demonstrate that improvements to the local transportation system and the existing interchanges cannot be improved to satisfactorily accommodate the design year travel demands. Describe traffic mitigation measures considered at locations where the level of service is (or will be) below service standards in the design year.

The access point revision is primarily to meet regional, not local, travel demands. Describe the local and regional traffic (trip link and/or route choice) benefiting from the proposal.

(b) ***Analysis and Data.*** The proposal analysis, data, and study area must be agreed upon by the support team. The assumptions document captures the specific items.

Show that a preliminary (planning level) analysis, comparing build to no-build (baseline) data, was conducted for the current year, year of opening, and design year, comparing baseline, no-build condition, and build alternatives. Include the following steps:

- Define the study areas. The study area normally includes one interchange upstream and downstream from the proposed system revision. If the proposal's area of influence extends beyond those interchanges, the study area will be expanded accordingly.
- Collect and analyze current traffic volumes to develop current year, year of opening, and design year peak hour traffic estimates for the regional and local systems in the area of the proposal. Use regional transportation planning organization-based forecasts, refined by accepted travel demand estimating procedures. Forecasts for specific ramp traffic can require other methods of estimation procedures and must be consistent with the projections of the travel demand models. Modeling must include increased demand caused by anticipated development.
- Using existing information, identify the origins and destinations of trips on the local systems, the existing interchange/ intersections, and the proposed access.
- Assign the appropriate travel demand to improvements that might be made to:
- The local system (widen, add new surface routes, coordinate the signal system, control access, improve local circulation, or improve parallel roads or streets).
- The existing interchanges (lengthen or widen ramps, add park and ride lots, or add frontage roads).
- The freeway lanes (add collector-distributor roads or auxiliary lanes).
- Transportation system management and travel demand management measures.
- Describe the current, year of opening, and design year level of service at all affected locations within the study area, including local systems, existing ramps, and freeway lanes.

(2) Policy Point 2: Reasonable Alternatives

Describe the reasonable alternatives that have been evaluated.

Describe all reasonable alternatives that have been considered: the design options, locations, and transportation system management-type improvements such as ramp metering, mass transit, and HOV facilities that have been assessed and that meet the proposal design year needs.

After describing each of the alternatives that were proposed, explain why reasonable alternatives were omitted or dismissed from further consideration.

Future projects must be coordinated as described in Policy Point 7.

(3) Policy Point 3: Operational and Accident Analyses

How will the proposal affect safety and traffic operations at year of opening and design year?

Policy Point 3 documents the procedures used to conduct the operational and accident analyses and the results that support the proposal.

The preferred operational alternative is selected, in part, by showing that it will not have a significant adverse impact on the operation and safety of the freeway and the affected local network, or that the proposal impacts will be mitigated.

Document the results of the following analyses in the report:

- "No-Build" Analysis – An operational analysis of the current year, year of opening, and design year for the existing limited access freeway and the affected local roadway system. This is the baseline "no-build" condition, including state transportation plan and comprehensive plan improvements expected to exist. All of the alternatives will be compared to the no-build condition.
- "Build" Analysis – An operational analysis of the year of opening and design year for the proposed future freeway and the affected local roadway system.

- An accident analysis for the most current data year, year of opening, and design year of the existing limited access freeway and the affected local roadway system for the "no-build." An accident analysis should also be performed for the "build" as well.

The data used must be consistent with the data used in the environmental documentation. If not, provide justification for the discrepancies.

(a) ***Operational Analyses.*** Demonstrate that the proposal does not have a significant adverse impact on the operation of the freeway or the adjacent affected local roadway system. If there are proposal impacts, explain how the impacts will be mitigated.

Document the selected operational analysis procedures. For complex urban projects, a refined model might be necessary. As a minimum, an analysis using the current version of the latest accepted *Highway Capacity Manual* (HCM) is necessary. Any procedure used must provide a measure of effectiveness compatible with the HCM. WSDOT currently supports the following traffic analysis and traffic simulation software:

- HCS
- Synchro
- Vissim
- Corsim

Refer to Chapter 610, "Traffic Analysis," for more detail.

FHWA must conduct its independent analysis using HCS. In those instances where HCS is not the appropriate tool to use and a simulation-type software is chosen, early coordination with FHWA is necessary.

All operational analyses shall be of sufficient detail, and include sufficient data and procedure documentation to allow independent analysis during FHWA and HQ evaluation of the proposal. For Interstates, HQ must provide concurrence before it transmits the proposal to FHWA with its recommendation.

Prepare a layout displaying adjacent interchanges/intersections and the data noted below. The data should show:

- Distances between intersections or ramps of a proposed interchange, and that of adjacent existing and known proposed interchanges.
- Design speeds.
- Grades.
- Truck volume percentages on the freeway, ramps, and affected roadways.
- Adjustment factors (such as peak hour factors).
- Affected freeway, ramp, and local roadway system traffic volumes for the "no-build" and each "build" option. This will include: A.M. and P.M. peaks (noon peaks, if applicable); turning volumes; average daily traffic (ADT) for the current year; and forecast ADT for year of opening and design year.
- Affected main line, ramp, and local roadway system lane configurations.

The study area of the capacity analysis on the local roadway system includes documenting that the local network is able to safely and adequately collect and distribute any new traffic loads resulting from the access point revision. Expand the limits of the study area, if necessary, to analyze the coordination required with an in-place or proposed traffic signal system. Record the limits of the analysis as well as how the limits were established in the project assumptions document.

Document the results of analyzing the existing access and the proposed access point revision at all affected locations within the limits of the study area, such as weave, merge, diverge, ramp terminals, accident sites, and HOV lanes; along the affected section of freeway main line and ramps; and on the affected local roadway system. In the report, highlight the following:

- Any location for which there is a significant adverse impact on the operation or safety of the freeway facility, such as causing a reduction of the operational efficiency of a merge condition at an existing ramp; introducing a weave; or significantly reducing the level of service on the main line due to additional travel demand. Note what will be done to mitigate this adverse impact.

- Any location where a congestion point will be improved or eliminated by the proposal, such as proposed auxiliary lanes or collector-distributor roads for weave sections.
- Any local roadway network conditions that will affect traffic entering or exiting the freeway. If entering traffic is to be metered, explain the effect on the connecting local system (for example, vehicle storage).
- When the existing local and freeway network does not meet the desired level of service, show how the proposal will improve the level of service or keep it from becoming worse than the no-build condition in the year of opening and the design year.

(b) ***Accident Analysis.*** The Accident Analysis identifies areas where there may be a safety concern. The study limits are the same as for operational analyses.

Identify and document all safety program (I2) locations. Identify and document accident histories, rates, and types for the freeway section and the adjacent affected local surface system. Project the rates that will result from traffic flow and geometric conditions imposed by the proposed access point revision. Document the basis for all assumptions.

Demonstrate (1) that the proposal does not have a significant adverse impact on the safety of the freeway or the adjacent affected local surface system, or (2) that the impacts will be mitigated. The safety analysis for both existing and proposed conditions should include the following:

1. Type of Accidents
   - What types of accidents are occurring (overturns, rear-ends, enter-at-angle, hitting fixed object)?
   - What types of accidents are most prevalent?
   - Are there any patterns of accident type or cause?
2. Severity of Accidents (fatalities, disabling, evident injuries, property damage)
3. Accident Rates and Numbers
   - Document the number and rate of accidents within the study limits for existing and proposed conditions.
   - What are the existing and anticipated crash/serious injury/fatality rates and numbers by proximity to the interchange exit and entrance ramps?
   - How do these rates compare to similar corridors or interchanges?
   - How do these rates compare to the future rates and numbers?
   - What are the existing and anticipated crash/serious injury/fatality rates and numbers for the impacted adjacent and parallel road system (with and without the access revision)?
4. Contributing Factors and Conclusions
   - Document contributing causes of accidents and conclusions. What are the most prevalent causes?
   - Evaluate and document the existing and proposed roadway conditions for geometric design standards, stopping sight distance and other possible contributing factors. Would the proposal reduce the frequency and severity of accidents?

(4) Policy Point 4: Access Connections and Design

Will the proposal provide fully directional interchanges connected to public streets or roads, spaced appropriately, and designed to full design level geometric control criteria?

Wherever possible, provide for all directions of traffic movement. The intent is to provide full movement at all interchanges, whenever possible. Partial interchanges are discouraged. Less than fully directional interchanges for special-purpose access for transit vehicles, for HOVs, or to or from park-and-ride lots, will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

A proposed new or revised interchange access must connect to a public freeway, road, or street and be endorsed by the local governmental agency or tribal government having jurisdiction over said public freeway, road, or street.

Explain how the proposed access point relates to present and future proposed interchange configurations and the *Design Manual* spacing criteria. Note that urban and rural interchange spacing for crossroads also includes additional spacing requirements between the noses of adjacent ramps, as noted in Chapter 940.

Develop the proposal in sufficient detail to conduct a design and operational analysis. Include the number of lanes, horizontal and vertical curvature, lateral clearance, lane width, shoulder width, weaving distance, ramp taper, interchange spacing, and all traffic movements. This information is presented as a sketch or a more complex layout, depending on the complexity of the proposal.

The status of all known or anticipated project deviations must be noted in this policy point, as described in Chapter 330.

(5) Policy Point 5: Land Use and Transportation Plans

Is the proposed access point revision compatible with all land use and transportation plans for the area?

Show that the proposal is consistent with local and regional land use and transportation plans. Before final approval, all requests for access point revisions must be consistent with the metropolitan and/or statewide transportation plan, as appropriate. (See Chapter 120.) The proposed access point revision will affect adjacent land use and, conversely, land use will affect the travel demand generated. Therefore, reference and show compatibility with the land use plans, zoning controls, and transportation ordinances in the affected area.

Explain the consistency of the proposed access point revision with the plans and studies, the applicable provisions of 23 CFR Part 450, and the applicable transportation conformity requirements of 40 CFR Parts 51 and 93.

If the proposed access is not specifically referenced in the transportation plans, define its consistency with the plans and indicate the process for the responsible planning agency to incorporate the project. In urbanized areas, the plan refinement must be adopted by the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) before the project is designed. The action must also be consistent with the *State Transportation Plan*.

(6) Policy Point 6: Future Interchanges

Is the proposed access point revision compatible with a comprehensive network plan? Is the proposal compatible with other known new access points and known revisions to existing points?

The report must demonstrate that the proposed access point revision is compatible with other known new access points and known revisions to existing points.

Reference and summarize any comprehensive freeway network study, plan refinement study, or traffic circulation study.

Explain the consistency of the proposed access point revision with those studies.

(7) Policy Point 7: Coordination

Are all coordinating projects and actions programmed and funded?

When the request for an access point revision is generated by new or expanded development, demonstrate appropriate coordination between the development and the changes to the transportation system.

Show that the proposal includes a commitment to complete the other noninterchange/ nonintersection improvements that are necessary for the interchange/intersection to function as proposed. For example, if the local circulation system is necessary for the proposal to operate, it must be in place before new ramps are opened to traffic. If future reconstruction is part of the mitigation for design year level of service, the reconstruction projects must be in the *State Highway System Plan*.

All elements for improvements are encouraged to include a fiscal commitment and an anticipated time for completion. If the project is to be constructed in phases, it must be demonstrated in Policy Point 3 that each phase can function independently and does not affect the safety and operational efficiency of the freeway. Note the known funding sources, the projected funding sources, and the estimated time of completion for each project phase.

(8) Policy Point 8: Environmental Processes

What is the status of the proposal's environmental processes? This section should be something more than just a status report of the environmental process; it should be a brief summary of the environmental process.

All requests for access point revisions on freeways must contain information on the status of the environmental approval and permitting processes.

The following are just a few examples of environmental status information that may apply:

- Have the environmental documents been approved? If not, when is the anticipated approval date?
- What applicable permits and approvals have been obtained and/or are pending?
- Are there hearings still to be held?
- Is the environmental process waiting for an engineering and operational acceptability decision?

1425.06 Documentation

A list of documents that are to be preserved in the Design Documentation Package (DDP) or the Project File (PF) can be found on the following web site:
http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/EESC/Design/projectdev/

Project Type	Support Team	Policy Point								Concurrence	Approval
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Interstate Routes											
New freeway-to-crossroad interchange in a Transportation Management Area(1)	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	FHWA and HQ	FHWA DC
New partial interchange	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	FHWA and HQ	FHWA DC
New HOV direct access	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	FHWA and HQ	FHWA DC
New freeway-to-freeway interchange	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	FHWA and HQ	FHWA DC
Revision to freeway-to-freeway interchange in a Transportation Management Area(1)(2)	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	FHWA and HQ	FHWA DC
New freeway-to-crossroad interchange not in a Transportation Management Area(1)	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	HQ	FHWA
Revision to freeway-to-freeway interchange not in a Transportation Management Area(1)(2)	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	HQ	FHWA
Revision to interchange(2)(3)	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	HQ	FHWA
Revision to existing interchange—no adverse impacts to main line	No	(6)	(6)	✓	✓	(6)	(6)	(6)	(6)	HQ	FHWA
Transit flyer stop on main line	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	HQ	FHWA
Transit flyer stop on an on-ramp	No			✓	✓					HQ	FHWA
Addition of entrance or exit ramps that complete basic movements at an existing interchange	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	HQ	FHWA
Abandonment of a ramp(4)	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	HQ	FHWA
Locked gate(7)	No	✓			(5)					HQ	FHWA
Access breaks that do not allow any type of access to main line or ramps	No	✓	✓		(5)					HQ	FHWA
Pedestrian structure	No	✓			(5)					HQ	FHWA
Construction/emergency access break	No	✓	✓	✓	✓					Region	FHWA

Notes:

(1) In Washington, designated Transportation Management Areas include Clark, King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish, and Spokane Counties.

(2) "Revision" includes changes in interchange configuration, even though the number of access points does not change. Changing from a cloverleaf to a directional interchange is an example of a "revision." If the revision does not add new lanes and can be shown to have no adverse impacts, and the spacing and geometric control criteria requirements will be met, a modified IJR will be the acceptable document, meaning fewer than the eight policy points will be required. Consult the HQ Access and Hearings Unit for direction.

(3) Revisions that might adversely affect the level of service of the through lanes. Examples include: doubling lanes for an on-ramp with double entry to the freeway; adding a loop ramp to an existing diamond interchange, replacing a diamond ramp with a loop ramp. If the revision does not have adverse impacts to the Interstate main line, and the spacing and geometric control criteria requirements will be met, a modified IJR will be the acceptable document.

(4) Unless it is a condition of the original approval.

(5) Update the right-of-way/limited access plan as necessary.

(6) If the results of the operational analysis show an adverse impact to the main line, the remaining policy points must be fully, not briefly, addressed.

(7) As part of Policy Point 1, include a narrative stating that all other alternatives are not feasible.

Interstate Routes – Interchange Justification Report Content and Review Levels

Figure 1425-1

Project Type	Support Team	Policy Point								Concurrence	Approval
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Non-Interstate Routes											
New freeway-to-crossroad interchange on a predominately grade-separated corridor	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Region	HQ
New freeway-to-freeway interchange	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Region	HQ
Revision to freeway-to-freeway interchange	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Region	HQ
New freeway-to-crossroad interchange on a predominately at-grade corridor	No			✓	✓					Region	HQ
Revision to interchange(1)	No			✓	✓					Region	HQ
Addition of entrance or exit ramps that complete basic movements at an existing interchange	No			✓	✓					Region	HQ
Abandonment of a ramp(2)	No			✓						Region	HQ
Locked gate(4)	No	✓			(3)					Region	HQ
Pedestrian structure	No	✓			(3)					Region	HQ
Construction/emergency access break	No	✓	✓	✓						Region	HQ

Notes:

(1) Revisions that might adversely affect the level of service of the through lanes. Examples include: doubling lanes for an on-ramp with double entry to the freeway, adding a loop ramp to an existing diamond interchange, and replacing a diamond ramp with a loop ramp. If the revision does not have adverse impacts to the main line, and the spacing and geometric control criteria requirements will be met, a modified IJR will be the acceptable document.

(2) Unless it is a condition of the original approval.

(3) Update the right-of-way/limited access plan as necessary.

(4) As part of Policy Point 1, include a narrative stating that all other alternatives are not feasible.

Non-Interstate – Interchange Justification Report Content and Review Levels

Figure 1425-2

Interstate actions that *may not* require an IJR or FHWA action.

Project Type	Examples/Comments
Minor revision to existing freeway-to- freeway interchange	To bring to standard
Increasing the length of an exit ramp deceleration lane or entrance ramp acceleration lane	To meet current geometric control criteria
Relocating entrance or exit ramp gore points along the main line	
Adding an auxiliary lane between two adjacent interchange ramps	
Ramp terminal revision at the terminal connection with the crossroad, with no effect to the main line lanes of the interstate.	New turn pocket(s), through lane(s), signalization, roundabout(s)
Converting a one-lane ramp to two lanes with no effect on the through lanes of the Interstate	If there are impacts to the main line, an IJR is required. Contact the HQ Access and Hearings Unit for direction.
Transit flyer stops near the ramp terminals of on-ramps	

Complete Policy Point 3 first for all proposals. If Policy Point 3 shows impacts to the main line, complete the remaining Policy Points.

Notes:

The table above shows some, but not all, of the types of access revisions that normally do not require an Interchange Justification Report.

All changes to limited access routes must receive the approval of the Assistant State Design Engineer.

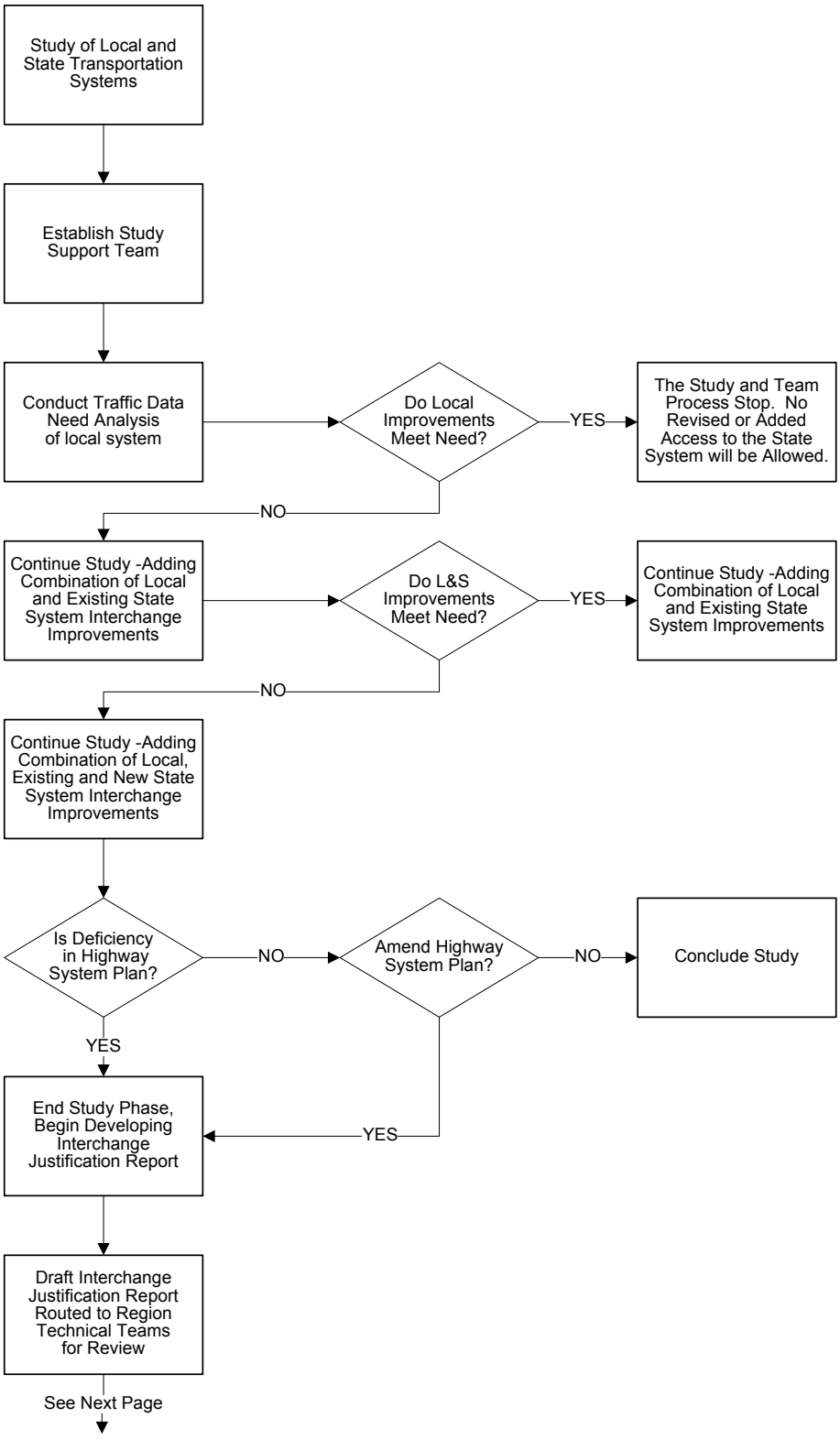
All access changes on Interstate routes must be approved by FHWA.

If the following conditions are met, the proposal may be considered under lesser documentation:

- A traffic analysis documents that there will be no adverse impact to the freeway main line.
- The data used is consistent with the data used in the environmental analyses.
- The access is designed to the design level required by the appropriate Design Matrix.
- Access spacing meets requirements in Chapter 940.
- The project is approved per Chapter 330 as part of the Project Summary approval process.

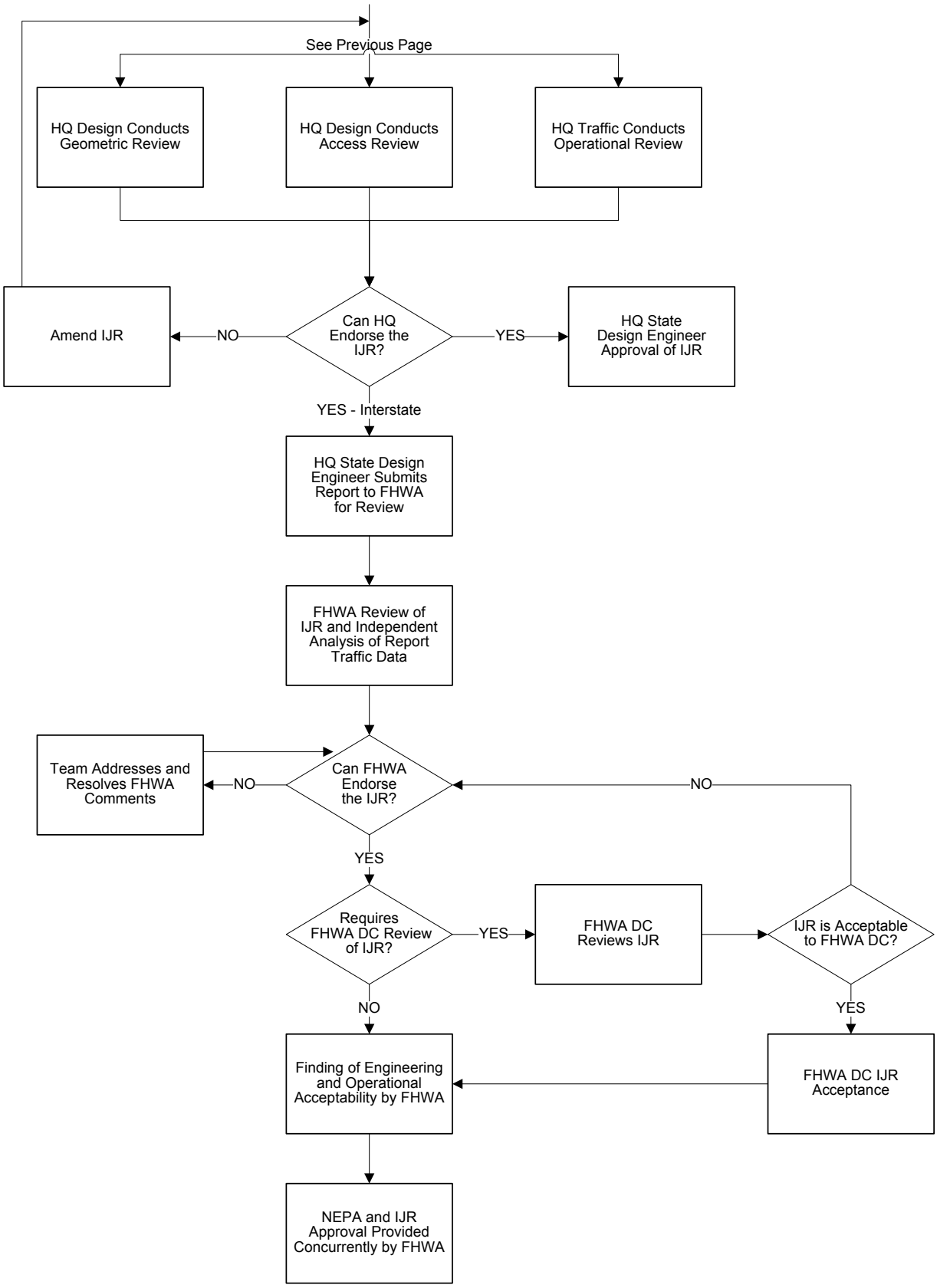
The omission of the IJR is justified in the Design Documentation Package, with a copy sent to the state Access and Hearings Engineer after the Assistant State Design Engineer has concurred in writing. If Interstate, FHWA must concur.

Interchange Justification Report Possibly Not Required
Figure 1425-3



Interchange Justification Report Process Flow Chart

Figure 1425-4



Interchange Justification Report Process Flow Chart

Figure 1425-4 Continued